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# Department of Defense DIRECTIVE

February 22, 1997  
NUMBER 1315.17

ASD(ISA)

SUBJECT: Service Foreign Area Officer (FAO) Programs

Reference: (a) Chapters 4, 303, 505, and 803 of title 10, United States Code

## A. PURPOSE

This Directive establishes policy and assigns responsibilities, under reference (a), for the development of FAO programs within the Military Services.

## B. APPLICABILITY

This Directive applies to the Office of the Secretary of Defense, the Military Departments (including the Coast Guard when it is not operating as a Military Service in the Navy by agreement with the Department of Transportation), the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the Combatant Commands, the Defense Agencies, and the DoD Field Activities (hereafter referred to collectively as "the DoD Components"). The term "Military Services," as used herein, refers to the Army, the Navy, the Air Force, and the Marine Corps.

## C. POLICY

It is DoD policy that:

1. Close and continuous military-diplomatic interaction with foreign government defense and military establishments is essential to develop and maintain the capability to engage in constructive, mutually supportive, bilateral and multilateral military activities and relationships across the range of operations.

2. The DoD military-diplomatic offices at U.S. Embassies and diplomatic posts must be staffed with commissioned officers with a broad range of skills and experiences. The officers also must be versed in political-military affairs; familiar with the political, cultural, sociological, economic, and geographic factors of the countries and regions in which they are stationed; and proficient in the predominant language(s) of the populations of their resident countries and regions. As well, the DoD Components require officers with similar capabilities to serve in their organizations.

3. Officers who possess the experience and skills necessary for effective military diplomacy and for service on political-military staffs shall be trained by each of the Military Services and retained for such assignments.

4. The Military Services shall develop procedures to ensure competitive career advancement for officers in the Service FAO Program that best supports the DoD elements and Military Services' requirement for qualified FAOs.

D. RESPONSIBILITIES

1. The Under Secretary of Defense for Policy, with assistance from the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness, shall provide policy oversight of the Service FAO Program.

2. The Secretaries of the Military Departments shall develop commissioned officer management programs, suitable to specific needs of each of the Military Services, that develop, retain, and monitor officers possessing the following:

a. Graduate-level education focusing on, but not limited to, the political, cultural, sociological, economic, and geographic factors of specific foreign countries and regions, or duty experience in the foreign countries and regions in which they specialize.

b. Foreign language skills at the professional level in the predominant language used by the populations of the countries or regions in which they specialize.

c. Qualification in their principal military specialties.

3. The Heads of the DoD Components shall designate officer positions in their organizations that require the qualifications listed in subsection D.2., above, and shall so inform the Secretaries of the Military Departments, using departmental or Joint Manpower Program processes, of their requirements.

E. EFFECTIVE DATE

This Directive is effective immediately.



John P. White  
Deputy Secretary of Defense